

VENDOR FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION (Issue No. 1)

What is the best way to search for a vendor's VID?

The best way to search for a "Commercial" vendor is in the VEND Table using the Tax payers ID (TIN). This will call up each remittance address available in the system for that vendor.

If you search for a vendor by the vendor name (VNAM), you may have to search more than once, using different variations of their name (example: IBM, I.B. M., International Business Machines) If you have the TIN, you only search once.

*Also, unless you have been granted employee rights, your search in VNAM will show blanks in-between your vendors and an error message for those blank entries (error: "*S304 ACTION NOT AUTH FOR SEC1") at the bottom of the screen. These blanks are for employees in the system. In order to find the vendor name you will need to scroll through these to get to your vendor. This could take some time depending on what your search criteria was. For instance if you start with "M" and you are searching for McDonald's, you will need to scroll through all the vendors (alphabetically) and all the intermittent blank employee screens. It is much faster to search in VEND with the TIN.*

You need the TIN to verify that you have the right vendor. Sometimes Company A and company B can have the same name but a different TIN. For example: McDonald's, there are many McDonald's, each independently franchised and therefore each has a different TIN.

Therefore, search using the VEND Table and the company TIN for the most fool-proof, quickest, and least frustrating method to find the VID.

Remember, it is very important that when you search and find your vendor, that you verify the remittance address and TIN, in the FFIS VEND Table, for that vendor.

*There are times when VNAM searches are most helpful. For instance when searching for a Federal Agency and you do not have the VID. The VID entries for Federal Agencies are not made up from the agency TIN. They are made up from their Agency Location Code (ALC). So there can be many VID's that are very similar (for a downtown location) and many that can be different (spread throughout the United States). Searching for a Federal Agency in the VNAM will bring up **all** the Agency's addresses for you to see. This can also be helpful for other entities where you do not have the TIN and that have many addresses (example Federal Express).*

Who has the access to add a vendor?

Each REE Agency has designated an Agency Vendor Coordinator, and each Agency Coordinator has established who will have access to add a vendor.

ARS, several people have been granted access in each Area office and within ARS, AF. AFM selected divisions (EAD, FD, FMD, PPD-CB, PPD-PPB and NAL) and the FMD-FFIS Operations Branch (FFISOB) personnel will have two people with adding capability. The Area offices will be responsible for adding vendors for the locations within their area.

Please check with your Agency's Vendor Coordinator to find out who has access rights to add a vendor for your Agency.

What are the required fields to add a Commerical vendor?

The required fields are: (all other fields will default to the set default option)

Vendor Code

(9 position Tax payer ID number, followed by a space and one position alpha address code)

Vendor Name

(company name)

Address Line 1

(first address line of the remittance address) (second address line is not mandatory)

Address Line 3

(City, State and Zip of remittance address)

Vendor Type:

(can be found in the Vendor Type Reference Table (VTYP))

Comments:

When entering a new vendor address please populate the "COMMENTS" field indicating information on the person entering this information.

For example: The Agency (space), the Office (Area) (space), Month (hyphen) year, Person's initials.

ARS NPA 11-01 DJ (This is for Northern Plains Area Office on November 2001 by Dick Jansen)

CSREES 11-01 AM (This is for CSREES on November 2001 by Angela Moss)

VEND/PROV Code: B

(should always be "B" that way we can give and receive funds from this vendor)

****NOTE**** Home Org: 1240 is necessary only for Supplemental Employees/Consultants (Do not use for Commerical Vendors)

TAXPAYER ID#

(Nine position Taxpayer ID)

How will I know that a vendor I entered was accepted in the system?

Once you have completed all the necessary fields, go to the “ACTION” field, type an “A” in that field and then press enter. At the bottom of the screen you should see a message that says “All Lines Added.” That is confirmation that the vendor has been added. If you see error messages, make the corrections and type “A” in the “ACTION” field and press enter. When all the errors are corrected the vendor confirmation message will show at the bottom of the screen.

When trying to add a Vendor, what does it mean when I receive an error message that says “Add Key Found?”

It means that the vendor you are trying to add is already in the system with that same VID. Please search that vendor again to be sure that they are not already in the system. If it truly is a new remittance address, then enter it using the next available single alpha address code. (Example: 123456789 A, 123456789 B, 123456789 C, 123456789 D . . .)

How do I make changes to the VEND Table?

Changes are made by NFC through the COMT and COMR Tables available in the system. If you have access to the COMT and COMR Tables, you may use them to submit changes to NFC. If you do not, then forward the change to your Area Vendor Coordinator, and they will submit the change to NFC via the COMT & COMR Tables.

How does the COMT and COMR Tables work?

Once in the system put “N” in the Action field.

Type “COMT” in the TABLEID field. Press enter. The COMT Table will appear.

In the Action field put “A” for “Add”. Press enter.

The first field is the “Request Type:” Here you use “Q” for question or “R” for request. To “Add or change” use the “R” in this field

The next field is “Application ID:” ARS uses FF03

The Application ID field should default to the application that you have been given access to (FF00 for conversion and the one indicated above for production).

Tab through the next fields (Requester, Request date, and Request time) will default to your ID

information.

Under “Communication Text” type in your request and all the information NFC will need to fulfill your request. Do not hit “enter” until you are ready to send the request.

Once the request is sent, make sure you write down the “sequence number.” You will need this number for reference in the COMR Table. COMR and sequence number is how NFC will communicate back to you, and let you know your request was completed or if they need any other information. A couple days after sending a request or question through the COMT table, be sure to check the COMR table for the NFC response. If by chance you do not have the sequence number just enter request type "R" or "Q" and application ID "FF00." Next scroll through until you see your User ID "UxxN01" and your question/request. Not as fast as having the sequence number, but it works.

What is the proper procedure for entering a vendor if that vendor is a Federal Government Agency?

*All Federal Agencies have been added. For example, Forest Service, has over 6,000 entries. However, addresses do change from time to time. Since an agency may have many entries, **it is advisable** to have NFC add any additional Federal Agencies. Therefore, if you need to add a Federal Agency, **it is recommended** that the request be submitted to NFC on the COMT & COMR Tables.*

The information in the Vendor Manual on pages 10-12 will be helpful to you. NFC needs the minimum information for a Federal Agency: 1) Agency Location Code (ALC) which is a nine position number. 1-8 will be the Agency's ALC without dashes and the 9th position will be the character "F". If the Agency will be billed via OPAC please give that information to NFC, 2) Agency name, 3) Address, 4) if known, the Vendor Type (page 16 & 17) use G, H, V, W, X, or Z. If you are unsure, NFC will research it for you. Be sure that the minimum information is listed in your COMT request.

Can I still use the Access File that goes directly to NFC to get vendors into the VEND Table?

Yes, however, it may take up to a week before your vendors are added from the access file at NFC. Also, as we near conversion, we do not want to over burden NFC. With the direct entry there is no waiting.

How does VXP and VID work together?

VXP is a number NFC assigns to Vendors and is used for Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) purposes. If a vendor does not use EFT, please encourage them to do so by having them contact OCFO/NFC at 1-800-421-0323 and enroll in the Vendor Express Program.

The FFIS VID number goes in the second address line of the Purchase order. Do not put the VXP number in the address fields. Make sure you use the VID number that has a VXP address attached in the VEND Table.

***It is advisable** to let NFC enter vendors with VXP addresses. NFC routinely loads all VXP users into FFIS. There are times when a vendor has a VXP number, but has not completed the EFT circle and therefore not completely set up in Vender Express. How do we know they are giving us a valid VXP number? This is information only NFC would know, and we would have no way of verifying the VXP information. Need-less-to-say, what if we make a typo in the VXP number and don't catch it? The money could go anywhere.*

***To be on the safe side**, if you are using a vendor with a VXP and they are **not** in the system, **it is recommended** that the vendor information be sent to NFC via the COMT and COMR Table for adding. Make sure to give NFC the VXP number for verification.*

There is no standard address code for vendors with VXP. When searching for a vendor's address, look at all of the addresses in the VEND table and choose the one that is right for you. To help identify a vendor using EFT you will see the banking information on the bottom of the VEND Table and the "Customer Account" field populated by the number 68 followed by the nine digit VXP number. If there are two entries for the vendor in FFIS, one with information in the Customer Account field and one without, it is the preferred method to use the one with the VXP information.

Can we use a FFIS VID that was entered by another agency?

Yes, this is a common table that is available to all USDA Agencies. When using any VID, just be sure that the address is the same remittance address that you want and all the "Payment Flags" match your payment schedule needs.

Do we search for vendors only for procurement actions?

No, we should verify that a "vendor" is in the system for any transaction involving funds, out going and incoming funds. That would include but is not limited to; procurement, contracts, grants, and agreements, trust funds, and non-government travelers. The term "vendor" is used to identify any entity that we are doing business with.

Must a Vendor be in FFIS in order to "give" or "get" funds from our agency?

Yes, in order to have any monetary transaction complete in FFIS, the vendor must have a valid remittance address in the VEND Table. To be sure you can give and receive funds from that vendor, there will be a "B" in the VEND/PROV CODE field on the VEND Table.

I understand that the feeder systems (PRCH, PCMS, etc) will feed into FFIS. How are

contracts entered?

For contracts you must search the VEND Table and make sure the Vendor is in FFIS. If the Vendor is not in FFIS, enter it into the VEND Table with the correct remittance address. Print screen the Vendor information and keep it in the Contract file. To award or modify a contract you will use your regular award documents and attach a print screen of the vendor information from FFIS VEND Table and send it to NFC. NFC will enter the award into FFIS.

If your office is involved in the direct entry pilot (for ARS: PWA, SPA, AFM-FD, AFM-FMD) you will not be sending your documents to NFC for entry. After completing the award documents and searching the VEND Table, you will give this information to the designated responsible party to enter into the system.

We have been “cleaning up” our open purchase order actions. How will contracts be carried over for the next fiscal year?

The Contract Numbering Policy Memo, 04-01, has been issued and is available on the PPD web site. Please read and follow the numbering process carefully. A cross walk list of the old contract number and the new numbers will need to go to NFC by September 10, 2001 (PPD Alert 2001-1 to be issued the week of August 13.) As always, the contractor must be in the FFIS VEND Table. Taking these steps will help ensure they are correctly converted as we enter into the next fiscal year using FFIS.

If a vendor using the same remittance address in FFIS VEND Table is listed for a different pay schedule, should they be added again under a different pay schedule? For instances if the VEND Table lists 30 days, but I need to identify payment within 15 days, will this vendor need to be added to the system a second time?

If you are using a feeder such as PRCH then the answer is yes, the vendor must be entered into the VEND Table twice. That is because when using a feeder system the FFIS VEND Table established payment schedule will take precedence. In that case, you will have two entries for the vendor, one indicating 30 days and the other indicating 15 days (the system will default to 30 days if you do not populate that field.) However, if you are using direct entry, you may over-ride the VEND Table payment schedule by entering the information on the Payment Voucher (PV). With direct entry, the information on the PV will take precedence over the VEND Table. It is important that this information be communicated to the person doing the direct entry.

Since the VID must go on all obligating documents, shouldn't the vendors put the VID number on their invoices?

Yes, it would make the payment process easier. It is a good practice to make sure your vendor knows their VID and references it for any monetary transaction such as invoicing.

Is it possible for a vendor to have the same Tax ID, but have different vendor information (name, remittance address, etc.) Would they need a different Alternate Address Code (alpha). For example, 123456789 A, 123456789 B, etc?

Yes, it is possible for a vendor to have the same Tax ID but a different vendor name. An example of this would be if a sole proprietorship owned more than one business. The Tax ID would be the owner's social security number, which would be valid for both businesses. When a situation like this occurs, first verify the information with the vendor. Then enter the second business with an alternate address code.

Do I have to look up a vendor if I am using my Government Purchase Card?

No, you do not have to look up your vendor when using your Government Purchase Card. All Purchase Card transactions will feed nightly into FFIS. All PCMS transaction have the Bank of America as the Vendor. FFIS will list the merchant you bought the item from in the description field for reference. Since FFIS recognizes the Bank of America as the vendor, and Bank of America is in the VEND Table, there is no need to look it up.